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Of our first parent, for that there, where earth
 Stood in obedience to the heavens, she only,
 Woman, the creature of an hour endured not
 Restraint of any veil; which had she borne
 Devoutly, joys ineffable as these
 Had from the first, and long time since, been mine."

Of Dante's private life we know very little. He himself has left absolutely nothing on record about his family affairs; and Boccaccio, his first biographer, was evidently tender of saying anything which should injuriously affect any member of it. All that we know with certainty is, that his wife managed to keep her own portion of the estate when his property was confiscated in his exile, and that the family, two sons and a daughter, were carefully brought up, three sons dying in childhood; the two who survived, Dante sent for, and had at intervals with him, to assist in their university education, and they became respectable men of letters. The daughter, Beatrice, took the veil. Some of the later biographers, writing after the death of his wife, did not hesitate to proclaim her a perfect Xantippe in temper, but she was, at any rate, a woman of energy and prudence. That Dante has said nothing of his family affairs may be quite as properly attributed to delicacy as to indifference. Situated as he was, he could do but little to help them; what he could he did. This may be inferred from the love and veneration with which his children regarded him. One of the sons published a commentary upon the *Commedia*. Few books of permanent fame have met with such immediate and universal honor as Dante's poem. Shortly after his death, a Professor of the *Commedia* was appointed by the Republic of Florence, which had spurned him when living. The office was first filled by Boccaccio, who, in Aug., 1337, began his professional duties by reading and commenting upon the *Commedia*, on Sunday, in the Church of St. Stefano. The office was subsequently filled by many distinguished men, and it became the fashion to have Dante read in public, not only in all the principal cities of Italy, but also in France, from which latter kingdom it was subsequently interdicted by a king, who thought his ancestry reflected upon in the *Commedia*.

No poet has probably inspired so many works of art as Dante. Among the painters and sculptors who have sought subjects from him may be named Giotto, Orcagne, Massacio, Zucari, Flaxman, and particularly Michael Angelo Buonarrotti, who made sketches illustrating every canto in the book, but all of which were unfortunately lost by shipwreck. Michael Angelo was an intense admirer of Dante, and we cannot better conclude this sketch than by transcribing one of the great artist's sonnets upon the great poet.

"Justly to speak his praise all speech must fail,
 For Dante's splendid beams our vision blind:
 Language shall sooner reach the guilt of those
 Who wronged him, than his smallest merit tell.

The realms beneath, of sin, he viewed, and then
 To God ascended, to instruct mankind;
 Nor heaven her lofty gates opposed to him,
 Whose country's gates were closed to every prayer.
 Yet to be like him welcome were his fate!
 His virtue and his banishment to share
 The happiest state on earth I would exchange.
 Ungrateful country! of his glory nurse
 When ruin was thy aim. And well he shows
 That men most perfect most abound in woe;
 Proof strong as thousands singly he affords,
 For exile so unjust on earth ne'er fell,
 And nobler mind than his the world ne'er saw."

"OUR ENGLISH HOME."

THE word Home with the English is a sort of linguistic idol, a national rhetorical joss. Like the Mohammedans in their unitarian pride, the English substantially proclaim that there is but one Home in the world and that is the Home of England. Certain it is that the English term conveys more meaning than can be got out of the German *heim* or *zu hause*, the French *chez*, *foyer* or *maison*, the Italian *casa*, or any other term of like import used by the orthodox great lingual powers of Europe; it is a simple little cluster of letters as graphic as the most complicated Egyptian hieroglyphic. But because the English term is a happy philological hit, does it follow that a genuine, complete Home is not to be found out of England? Because England is virtuous shall there be "no more cakes and ale" elsewhere? Because heavy "entire" suits the breathers of London fog shall not we Yankees rejoice over buckwheat cakes and lager? We prize our Home in America (notwithstanding Louis Napoleon says man has not yet taken root here) because it is a Home, and in spite of the sarcasm which declares its comforts to be more dependent on the "help" than on the highly educated mistress of it, a graduate among "the fives" at the National Steam-Educating Female Institute. We prize our Home, not because we believe it to be a model home, nor because we inherit the type of it as a complete physical asylum from our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, but because it has been a sacred institution from the beginning, because we believe it to be one of those things that has no end, and because it is the harbor of the family where the affections ride in safety, protected by the mighty spirit of universal civilization. We believe other people have Homes as good as ours. Without enlarging on the Indian's wigwam or the wandering Arab's tent, Homes as beautiful as the Caucasian's in many respects, we will enter a demurrer in behalf of many charming Homes that may be found in the neighborhood of "Our English Home." Whoever has called on a German *Frau* and has taken a cup of coffee from her own hand, in the neat but plainly furnished apartment, where both family and friends eat as heartily as

the English and talk a great deal more, will catch the spirit if not the organized forms and furniture of the best of homes. Whoever has observed a French *famille* on a journey, a flock of social birds in quest of enjoyment, or what is better than travelling instances—people being skeptical of a Frenchman's taste that way—an evening gathering of *mes parens* in hired *appartemens*, the company around a big table, every sententious word followed by a laugh as some point in an innocent game provides the opportunity, the *grand père* or *mon oncle*, of all the children assembled, being perhaps the liveliest and most delighted contributors to the family frolic; whoever has enjoyed either of these domestic *tableaux-vivants* dare not go away and pronounce the tabernacle of his own land the chief of the precincts in the world hallowed by the spirit of Home. Whoever has found himself in an Italian villa, gazing from an open window on the magnificent landscape around him, where every sweep of the eye commands visions of beauty such as a northern imagination cannot conceive of—whoever has thus absorbed the beauty of Italian nature in the presence of the sons and daughters of the soil, listening to judicious and loving comments on the interests of their native land, will not crave the comfortable parlor of an English Home, the protection of the British constitution, or thoughts on human progress according to a standard of English sensibility. But we are getting on political ground which we did not mean to do; we are wandering from our subject into the realm of generalities. We took up our pen to set forth certain historical information attending the growth of "Our English Home," narrated in a pleasant little book bearing the title thus quoted; it contains facts that will amuse and interest every reader. Our Home proves to be an accretion of comforts resulting from man's wants for many ages; every land has given birth to them and for the benefit of every people. From the tent to the palace, from Abraham to Queen Victoria, there is a steady march of refinement; every article of furniture, every implement of the table is in some way a commemorative sign of social progress, until Our Home has got to have something of ideal completeness. We cannot imagine, so far as its material elements are concerned, many improvements upon it, unless in this fast community we should yet come to cook by lightning and to buy our meat by colored photographs sent to the house every morning by a scientific butcher. Our Home is thus found not to be an indigenous plant, but a sort of conservatory made up of acclimated exotics; or of foreign grafts on a rude national stock. Take as a starting point the Home of King Alfred—a king's residence being the standard of progress, and after that a palace on the Fifth Avenue—who found "that the candles delivered for his use would not burn their allotted time, in consequence of the violence of the wind which blew through the doors, the windows and the crevices of the

walls." Such a house inhabited by a "people with whom the drunken revel was almost a religious rite, with whom to be drunk was to be godlike," shows the necessity of progress both in architecture and morals. This, however, was the English Home of Pagan Saxondom. The people at a much later period had progressed to cottages described as follows:

The walls of early cottages were of clay or rubble, and of a nature incapable of supporting a roof of any weight; the floors were probably paved with pebbles. Sometimes it had two apartments, the first occupied by the cow, the pigs and the poultry; and in the other were huddled promiscuously all the members of a peasant's family—a circumstance that afforded a fruitful subject for the fabliaux of the Norman trouvères, who often loved to turn a jest in reference to the shifts to which indigence compelled the peasant to resort; which the minstrels avenged, by singing in the ale-houses and about the streets, sturdy ballads respecting the follies and extravagance of the rich. Longland, in "Piers the Ploughman," gives an uninviting picture of a cottage home. The dank smoke from the turf fire could find no vent but through the loop holes and chinks of the door; and we are not surprised that the ploughman should complain, that the

Smoke and smorthae smyt in his eyen.

Chaucer, in the "Tale of the Nun's Priest," describes the cottage of the widow as consisting of two apartments, designated even in such poverty, by the high-sounding appellations of hall and bower. Whilst the widow and her "daughter two," slept in the bower; chanticleer and his seven wives, roosted on a perch in the hall, and the swine ensconced themselves on the floor. As in the ploughman's home, the smoke of the fire had to find its way through the crevices of the roof; and the poet tells us that—

Well sooty was her bowre and eke her halle,
In whiche she ete many a slender mele.
Of poynant sawce ne knew she never a dele.
No decenre morsel passed through hir thoughte,
Hire diet was according to her cote.

If we had been one of the people of that day, the first thing with us would have been to get rid of the smoke. We are told that

Chimneys, in the time of King Edwin, were not known, and the smoke from the fire, which burned in the centre of the hall, escaped through an opening in the roof. . . . Chimneys were rarely introduced into the halls of the middle ages, until the change in the style and arrangement of domestic architecture, by the building of solars or chambers over the hall, necessitated some more convenient contrivance than the ancient louvre. The fire was then kindled against the side, and a cover or canopy was constructed over it to draw the smoke, which was thus led to escape through a hole in the wall. The smoke was sometimes conveyed above the roof by chimneys.

The adoption of the chimney is not alone a sign of physical discomfort, but also a sign of mental discomfort, for we are told that Piers the Ploughman, the popular poet, denounced the growing practice of dining in "privy parlors with chimneys" as an indication of

the effeminate luxury of the age. Our author says that "we did not gain our fireside without a struggle; sage old men of yore shook their heads at these enervating signs, and saw in them the decay of the commonwealth and other sad disasters."

Next to the chimney, we quote another feature of the hall:

The floor of the hall was seldom paved, but when occupied was usually strewed with rushes or straw. In 1207 the barons of the Exchequer were ordered to repay Robert de Leveland the moneys he had expended in straw and sand for King John, when his majesty had slept at his house at Westminster. The straw was allowed to remain so long that, mingled with the refuse of the table, it often became rotten and offensive. Nor was this the only annoyance to which the inmates were subject: it was complained that even the hall of the king was insupportable from the stench arising from an uncovered drain, which passed almost under the noses of the guests as they sat at table. It is instanced as a proof of the elegant style in which Thomas à Becket lived, that he ordered the floor of his dining-hall to be covered every morning in winter with clean straw, and in summer with fresh-gathered rushes, that such of the knights who came to dine with him as could not find room on the benches, might sit down comfortably on the floor without spoiling their fine clothes.

The present accommodations of this country—a country younger now than England was in the days of King John, and about to welcome one of his descendants, presents quite a contrast in its comforts to those enjoyed by the royal travellers of that day. This custom of spreading rushes on the floor prevailed down to Shakspeare's time.

Even the floors of the banquetting halls and ball-rooms were covered with rushes; for Shakspeare says, that

—— Wantons light of heart
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels.

If the owner could boast of a carpet, it was reserved for the chamber or the parlor. Rushes not only allayed the dust, but served as a token of respect. "Are the rushes strewed?" asks Grumio, when expecting the arrival of Petruchio and his bride. On the floor were spread new rushes when guests were invited. It was an old joke among the wits of the Elizabethan age, that many strewed green rushes for strangers, who would not give a straw for a friend. To cover the floor, indeed, was deemed so necessary a point of courtesy, that when not performed it was said that the host did not care a rush or a straw for his guest: hence the origin of an expression common now.

We are tempted to copy a picturesque "Feasting in the Great Hall," but as every historical novel contains descriptions of the kind, we pass it for some information concerning household implements, and those more particularly connected with the table. We are often asked the question, what *is* Art? and frequently by persons who pass for very intelligent people. To quote Goethe, Cousin or the American Cyclopaedia in reply, would be a waste of learning, and any attempt to cast a definition of art in a metaphysical formula being beyond our

powers, to say nothing of the doubts as to whether it would be understood by inquiring minds of that order, all we can do on such occasions is to ask in return if our querists can analyze the difference between a three-legged stool and a Boston rocking-chair, both being made to sit upon. A very *low* view of Art we admit, but what can you do with people who are not instructed in Art in our common schools? The author of Our English Home says that "the chronicles of a spoon and the history of a platter tell us more of the gradual recognition of taste and beauty, and the consequent refinement of a people than could be gleaned from dignified records." Let us by all means have a legislative enactment instituting a course of platters and spoons in our schools and colleges—our intelligent community requires it. Table-forks therefore being artistically important, we place their history before our readers.

The antiquary is often surprised by the discovery of traces of useful inventions, which he can scarcely reconcile with the manners of the olden time; he can bring some incidental allusion, or can evidence some solitary example to prove that many articles of domestic economy which appear solely to appertain to modern times were in fact invented centuries ago, but being in the absence of a refined taste unappreciated, they were utterly neglected by our forefathers. Thus, although not often in use until the sixteenth century, the table-fork was known at an early period. Its invention may be traced to the East, and it was first introduced into Europe by the Venetians. Peter Damian, who wrote in the eleventh century, in one of his epistles, speaking of a fair damsel from Constantinople who had been married to a Doge of Venice, declares that her habits of luxury surpassed all conscience. She would not even eat as other people did, but had her meat cut into little pieces, and then conveyed them to her mouth with a two-pronged fork! Probably our thanks are due to this naughty princess for the introduction of the table-fork into Europe. We first find this article mentioned among our English Records in the thirteenth century. Among the jewels of Edward I. was a fork of crystal, presented to his majesty by Mary of Bretagne, Countess of St. Pol. Piers Gaveston, in the reign of Edward II., possessed three silver forks for eating pears, "pour mangier poires." John, Duke of Brittany, in 1306, used one of silver to pick up "soppys." Le Grand could find no notice of forks earlier than 1379, at which period they are mentioned in an inventory of the jewels of Charles V. In a memorandum of the Treasury dated the 14th Henry IV., we find a fork of crystal, and another of silver enumerated; and in the Wardrobe Accounts of Henry VII. is recorded a payment of twelve shillings to Master Brent for a fork of silver weighing three ounces. It is only in this scattered and incidental way that we find any allusion to this useful article previous to the sixteenth century, when they began to appear on the banquetting tables. Among the treasures of Henry VIII. were metal spoons with glass handles, and forks of metal gilt, "the stales being of glasse." In the reign of Elizabeth eleven knives and forks was the usual dessert set. The hafts were of ivory or silver gilt, engraved with ornaments or initials. Many sets are enumerated among the jewels of Elizabeth; the forks were used for taking up the Indian pre-

serves which were then in high esteem, and were called "ginger forks." The common use of the fork was one of the memorable things observed by Thomas Coryat, when travelling through Italy in 1608. He saw it used in no other country, and he did not think that it was used by any other nation in Christendom, but he so admired the novelty that he introduced it at table in England. The wits of the sixteenth, as did Peter Damian in the eleventh century, regarded its use as an indication of foppery. Poor Coryat was laughed at for his pains, and nicknamed "Furcifer the fork-bearer." Until late indeed in the seventeenth century this introduction was the subject of many a joke among the dramatic and satirical writers of the age, and a divine even went so far as to declare that the use of forks was a tacit insult to Providence who had given us fingers; but in spite of this, the invention was welcomed into use, and among the plate of Charles I. we find "sets of twelve forks."

And next come platters and trenchers:

The platters and trenchers in general use were of pewter or wood. Counterfeit vessels of pewter were for the feast, while those of wood or "tre" were for everyday service; the latter were sometimes square and made of white maple. It was the usage in domestic economy when a garnish of pewter was worn, to exchange it for a new service by paying the difference in the value of the metal. London platters were famous for their superior make, and were coveted even by the housewives of the North. At a later period Harrison says that even "beyond sea" a garnish of good flat English pewter was esteemed almost as precious as silver.

These matters may perhaps be regarded as undignified and trivial, but there are few of such domestic details that are not associated with some curious ceremony, some quaint custom, or some chivalric usage, which may, perhaps, unexpectedly illustrate some old author whose allusions would be otherwise obscure. Thus, in connection with platters, there was a domestic custom often alluded to in romance, which did not, as some have supposed, originate with any want of refinement, but from a feeling of friendship and politeness: this was the custom of the knight and his lady eating off the same trencher, and drinking from the same hanap. A lover gloried at receiving such a mark of condescension from his "ladye love," and the fair equally appreciated this gallant usage. A lady in romance, whom her jealous lord compelled to dine in the kitchen, bitterly complains that it was long since a knight had eaten on the same plate with her at table. In the "Proces of the Seven Sages," we read of a lady who, to show her affection, sat next to her husband,

Yat yai might of a plater etc.

And alluding to the conjugal love that existed between another happy twain, we are told,

Yat ilk day she and hir lorde,
Sold both togeder etc of a borde.

This gave rise to the pleasant usage of seating a lady and gentleman side by side at table. In the *Histoire de Perceforest* we read of a magnificent entertainment at which eight hundred chevaliers were seated at table, and by the side of each sat a damsel who ate off his plate. This in an age of chivalry must have lent a charm to the feast, and afforded opportunities for those tender expressions of regard, and for the celebration of those little conceits with which the feast was enlivened. This loving custom became gradually abolished. The Italians

have been accused of a rudeness of manners in retaining it so late as the age of Frederick II.; but in England, old-fashioned couples, carrying the customs of their youth with them in their age, have clung to this usage, and as they grew old together ate lovingly off the same plate, deeming it a happy boast that for so many years they had done so without strife. As late as the year 1752 the Duke and Duchess of Hamilton sat at the upper end of their table, and ate off the same plate.

This custom was rendered less agreeable by the prodigal use which was made of the fingers during the repast. It was not every damsel who recollected the advice of Ovid, whose "Art of Love," however, was a great favorite among them:

Your meat genteelly with your fingers raise,
And as in eating there's a certain grace,
Beware with greasy hands lest you besmear your face.

In connection with these homely implements we might write an essay on the progress of Art, and illustrate it with descriptions of the magnificent cups, salvers, ewers, goblets and vases that art has made so precious to amateurs of this day. Perhaps the best idea of the beauty of some of these articles can be had from their cost.

An ewer of silver-gilt is described among the jewels of Edward III. as triangular in shape, enamelled with the images of of the kings of Denmark, Germany and Arragon. This monarch appears to have expended large sums in such luxuries; his plate was exceedingly beautiful, and on one occasion £133 6s. 8d. was paid for an ewer of gold, incrustured with precious stones, for his majesty's use. This was equal to more than £2,000 of our currency. In the will of John Duke of Exeter, dated 1447, an ewer is described as decorated with a falcon taking a partridge, with a ruby in his mouth. But these examples are surpassed by the magnificent washing-basins belonging to Henry VI., which were richly chased, pounced and enamelled, garnished with precious stones, and covered with "kermery" work. Perhaps the most costly were a pair of gold, the description of which conveys some idea of the decorative art of the period: they were chased in the "maner of roses," pounced with "grete boseletts," garnished with divers escutcheons, and in the inside were enamelled the arms of St George, St. Edmund and St. Edward, the arms of the Emperor, the arms of England and France, and the arms of the principalities and of the duchy of Guienne. These splendid basins were valued at £458, a sum now equal to £5,000.

But Art was not as wholly material in those times as indicated by these magnificent services of plate. If "Art found but little encouragement to entice her across the threshold of Home, her graces were more admired, and even her less ambitious efforts found a warmer welcome in the cloister. . . . Monks read their missals radiant with gold and Tyrian blue, by light streaming through casements of gorgeous coloring—the lectern of the ecclesiastic was carved with exquisite beauty—the altar was a miracle of Gothic ornament." Tapestry appeared, imported from Flanders, to deck the hall and for parade on state occasions:

The merchant princes of England acquired fortunes by their commerce in the rich stuffs of Arras and Brabant. The cost of these household treasures was enormous. A monarch wish-

ing to propitiate the favor of a royal potentate, sent a few yards of arras as a present. The sale or transfer of a "halling" was completed by a deed, signed and sealed with due formality. They were bequeathed with minute specifications of their measurement, to an ell, even in the wills of kings and princes. They were paraded on state occasions; and chroniclers recording the magnificence of a baron, and wishing to impress their readers with his domestic luxury, rarely forgot to enumerate his arras and baudekin. The eye was delighted with the glories of ancient chivalry and the love-scenes of romance elaborately wrought in figures of gold on azure silk. Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, the mighty deeds of Guy of Warwick, of Alexander and Charlemagne, and sometimes the more alluring scenes from Ovid, glittering upon the cloth of gold, aroused the imaginations of the guests within the festive hall; while the most striking incidents of Bible history represented on the chamber hanging, appealing to the thought, led many who could not read, and who heeded not the matin-bell, to become curious about the word of truth. These representations were rendered still more valuable and instructive from the mottoes, wise sayings, and terse explanatory sentences which accompanied them, and which, from constant repetition, became household words, and gave birth to much of the proverbial wisdom current for ages among our ancestors.

Whether or not, in an absolute sense, it is the mission of Art to teach, certain it is that a large portion of mankind has been taught something through Art. It is an article of our faith that Art teaches some people some things that the said people could not learn in any other way. We sometimes fancy that certain very metaphysical minds would navigate the sea of thought better if they could be led to provide themselves with a few artistic safeguards. Innate ideas answer for the open sea of thought, but art provides lighthouses in its material symbols to indicate the final terra-firma to which all true navigators are ever bound.

We leave the question of Art for manners and customs. We quote first what "Our English Home" says of laundries, nightgowns, etc.

Those who have scanned the catalogues of costly raiment that crowded the wardrobes of the rich, cannot fail to have been surprised at the few items in household books indicative of personal cleanliness. Washing days had not, during the middle ages, the terrors they have now. The dyer covered a vast deal that the laundress would now extract, and his trade ranked high among the ancient guilds. The rich taffeta, the velvets and Tartaren silks, were often worn without a shred of under-clothing, as were also the coarse woollen garments by the domestics. A clean shirt was a luxury, and, indeed, the possession of a shirt of "reynes-clothe" or white linen was indicative of great personal splendor; even the wardrobes of nobles were deemed unusually rich if they included a few linen shirts. It was seldom that either sex wore shirts or nightgowns in bed, it being long the custom to sleep entirely naked. It is true the head was sometimes bandaged up like a mummy, or prinly dressed out with a couvre chef and ornamental gear; but this was only when guests were expected in the chamber. Even at a later period, when my lady occasionally indulged in a nightgown, it was probably a robe of silk or velvet. The night-dress of Anne Boleyn was made of

black satin, bound with black taffeta and edged with black velvet. The winter nightgown of Queen Elizabeth was also of black velvet, wrought with passanet lace of murry silk and gold, and lined with fur; on one occasion, in 1568, her majesty orders her trusty and well-beloved George Bradyman, to deliver "three score and six of the best sable skynnes, to furnish us a nightgowne!" The curious may perhaps be amused with the purport of another warrant, given under the sign-manual of the queen, by virtue of which, in 1572, she orders the delivery from her wardrobe of twelve yards of purple velvet, "frized on the backe syde with white and russet sylk" for a royal nightgown, and in the same warrant very singularly directs the delivery of fourteen yards of murry damask, for the "making of a nyghtgowne for the Erle of Leicester!"

A taste for personal cleanliness was but slowly acquired, but it is more observable in the fifteenth century than in any preceding period. We read that Lord Howard had four shirts made on one occasion, and gave the seamstress sixpence for her labor; and an old writer in his advice to servants directs the officer of the bed-chamber to take his master's shirt, and

Warm hit be the fire if the wedder be frysse.

Another, writing on etiquette, says,

The lord schall shyft his gowne at nyghte.

A shirt, too, was purchased for Master Howard when he went to college, but he does not appear to have been supplied with a change of linen. It is evident that up to that time, which was late in the fifteenth century, shirts were not for everyday use, or if they were, they must have been in a delightful condition when they reached the washing-tub; yet a shirt cost but twelve pence, equal to about as many shillings now. The tally of the laundress was short but profitable; she received a penny, and sometimes twopence, for washing the master's shirt, which was a day's wages at that time. The table and chamber linen being as limited as the personal, the laundress had not a very laborious office; she was allowed two standards, one to contain the clean linen, the other the soiled: more ample accommodation was not found necessary even in the luxurious palace of Henry VIII. The laundress was especially directed to procure as much "sweet powder, sweet herbs, and other sweet things," as should be necessary for the "sweet keeping" of the royal linen. This was perhaps more necessary from the practice common in early times of extracting the dirt by smearing the clothes with mud, or scouring them with dung, which, says Harrison, gave them such a savor that "I cannot abide to weare them on my bodie." The women with their clothes tucked up danced upon the linen, and the tubs were large enough for several to do this at once. As lie was used instead of soap, the cost of washing was not great when performed at home: we must not therefore always infer a proportionate inattention to cleanliness from the small amount expended in this branch of domestic economy.

The washing bills for a bishop and his numerous household for an entire year in the thirteenth century amounted to forty-three shillings and two pence, whilst the cost of the laundry in a ducal establishment in the time of Henry VIII., consisting of one hundred and seventy persons, was but forty shillings for a whole year.

Baths, however, were not uncommon:

The mediæval chambers were often furnished with "baynes," or baths, although they were perhaps but mere tubs, decorated

with a cover or canopy of tapestry. Isabella, queen of Edward II., had a bath adjoining her chamber in Hertford Castle. A bath was made ready for the gentle knight Sir Eglamour; and when Sir Bevis of Hampton was received by his lady love,

Into a chamber she gan him take,
And riche baths she lete him make.

When the heroes of Charlemagne had feasted in the hall, "they had the baynes chauffed, and then they bayned and refayed them in their ease;" and at the coming out of their baynes they were "wel adouted with mantels, ryche of sylke and golde brounded." In one of the grand chambers prepared for the ambassador of Charles of Burgundy to Edward IV., were baynes covered with tents of white cloth. The water was often perfumed with sweet-smelling herbs.

All comforts seem to have once been the prerogatives of royal personages from whom they descended to the commons. Feather beds were once palace luxuries; they are even yet held to be such in some of the houses of our democratic sovereigns, as anybody can testify who, to get rid of the dog-days, retreats to our country villages remote from railroads. Mattresses, however, will yet supplant the feathers as the neat cottage bedstead has supplanted the "four-post," a model of which is described in the following extract:

A ponderous four-post bedstead of ample dimensions was the solemn glory of a Tudor chamber. Its massive pillars bulging out in knobs of the richest carving, sometimes a foot and a half in diameter, towered to the ceiling, and bore a prodigious weight of selours, testers, vallances and hangings, which cast gloom and shadows thick upon the bed: the top of each post was ornamented with a cupid, the arms of the owner in metal-work, or with gilded vanes. One can understand how so many hallucinations arose in old time about haunted chambers, when we think of the solemnities of fly-bitten tapestries and grotesque carving with which the occupant of the "great bed" was encompassed. Griffins and monsters, frantic knights and distressed damsels in needlework, clustered thick around him; satyrs, "anticke boys," and the wild creations of mediæval fancy, grinning hideously, were carved in fantastic confusion over the head-board, up the pillars, and around the deep cornices of the bedstead.

Our space will not allow us to quote all the curious facts detailed in "Our English Home." Of mirrors we can only quote the circumstance of a "holy-water stoup" being formerly introduced at the bottom of the frame, "from which they who looked into the mirror might sprinkle themselves to guard against the temptation of vanity." Tea and coffee found their way into England about the middle of the seventeenth century.

A Greek named Canopios visited Oxford in 1637, and in preference to the *Ipocrase* and ale of the college buttery, quaffed a dark decoction strange to the Oxonians. Evelyn, perhaps, saw him drink the first cup of coffee ever drank in England. Twenty years later coffee became an important article of commerce, yielding a handsome revenue to the crown. A duty of fourpence a gallon was levied upon the beverage,

which was sold ready-made at the corners of the streets. Coffee-houses became numerous, and soon rivalled in customers the ale-houses of the city. The shops of those who were noted for the strength and flavor of their coffee became so thronged as to prove an annoyance to the neighborhood. James Furr, who kept the "Rainbow" in Lower Temple Gate, was prosecuted in 1657 for creating a nuisance by making and vending a liquor called coffee.

Oliver Cromwell drank Tea, perhaps at the cost of the nation, while those less favored paid from six to ten guineas a pound for it. Toward the end of the century, "The wits declared it a drink fit only for women, or men that lived like women; and Colley Cibber sneers at it as an innocent pretence for bringing the wicked of both sexes together of a morning."

While the higher classes were indulging in their Eastern luxuries, and while "my lady" would "quaff canary and buttered ale, or drink claret and eat bo targo," and deem it no disgrace to be led by her maid "more than half-muddled to her chamber," let us see how the country gentleman lived:

The home of the country gentleman was the least affected by these changes of manners. He still lived surrounded by the rude comforts of his ancestors, and his household was seldom altered to suit the prevailing fashions. He looked with contempt upon the luxury of the towns, and had no desire to improve his domestic economy by the recent inventions of science, or the alluring introductions of commerce. The ancient furniture of his hall and chambers was retained until it moldered with age. He was the last to observe old English customs, and the most tardy in adopting the vices of the age. His spacious kitchen, scrupulously clean, served as a common hall, and presented unmistakable signs of hospitality. An array of bacon fitches and prodigious hams filled the rack, and decorated the huge beams that girthed the ceiling. His table, rude and devoid of ornament, but polished with oaten meal until it glistened like ivory, was not unworthy to bear the goodly cheer with which it was daily loaded, and to which every guest, and every casual visitor, was alike heartily invited to partake. His hearth, piled high with goodly logs, shed a glow of comfort over the room, and shone brightly on the new garnish of London pewter that adorned the dresser. His chimney corner was the seat he loved in his convivial and social hours, and on the stone benches that flanked the fire he would gather around him the whole of his household. The happiest reminiscences of the childhood of our great-great-grandfathers were associated with those old firesides; it was there that they recited the marvels of ancient story, read the last chap-book purchased from the strolling peddler, or listened with rapt attention to the aged grandame, as with homely truth she explained the scenes from sacred history depicted upon the Dutch tiles that lined the chimney corner.

Considering the high standard of physical comforts above suggested, Englishmen are right, perhaps, who deem it their duty to maintain a character, the prevailing element in which is "a reverence for things ancient and a contempt for new-fangled notions." Coupling this trait with the instances before cited of the oppo-

sition of sage old men to chimneys and forks, we can readily account for Anglo Saxon tyranny of opinion and tyrannical practices in every stage of the world's progress. Lord Palmerston's brutality, Lord Brougham's insolence, and the tory hatred of liberty of Earl Derby are national characteristics traceable to the same source—the obstinate

old English gentleman, all of the olden time.

Thanks to a woman's negative rule, England is improving. The coarseness of English national character is disappearing before the universal refining influence of the "ever-feminine." Until some male genius shall arrive subtle enough to divine and pure enough to honor the high spiritual standard on which a woman's instincts repose, coarse natures will be benefited by the occasional sway of a woman's sceptre. It is fortunate for Englishmen that the Salic law was not grafted on the British Constitution. Female passivity is a useful, indispensable element of national progress. It is found to be so in the Family, which is the beginning and the end of civilization, and we greatly mistake if history does not prove it to be so in the annals of England. At all events, when the history of "Our English Home" comes to be written ages hence, it may be questioned whether the talents of any premier during the reign of Victoria will be estimated of the same service to society as the virtues of a mother and a woman in the person of that excellent and beloved monarch. God save the Queen!

RENOWN.—Wherever the polite arts appear, and flourish in a surpassing degree, the happy native of that soil may, without fear of refutation, arrogate to his country the rare triumph of universal renown. Other perfections shed their lustre like single stars in the canopy of heaven; the influence of the arts alone unites their distant fires, and presents the glories of a constellation. . . .

O Greece! thou sapient nurse of finer arts,
Which to bright science blooming fancy bore,
Be this thy praise, that thou, and thou alone,
In these hast led the way, in these excelled,
Crowned with the laurel of assenting time.

In Greece, the arts were applied to the highest purposes of society. They were employed to enforce religion, morality and obedience to the laws. . . . They multiplied enjoyments, and improved benevolence. . . . Here then they accomplished the signal end for which they are intrusted to man by his Creator.

* * * * *

In this progress of greatness, the course of the fine arts cannot be omitted nor neglected. According to the degree of their cultivation will be estimated the national portion of intellectual sensibility, and its capacity for advancement in mental elegance. . . . A nation is awful by its wisdom, tremendous by its arms, lovely by its intellectual arts.—*P. Hoare.*

TRUTH is the key of art, as knowledge is of power.—*Sir T. Lawrence.*

DUTCH ART.

BY LOUIS VIAUDOT.

"ART," says the great Lord Chancellor Bacon, "is man added to nature;" *ars est homo additus naturæ*. The pantheistic art of Holland could not be better defined. In the land of Spinoza every painter seems to have been content to see, love, contemplate and translate nature according to his individual feeling and taste, each one *adding himself* to nature. Even those painters who extended their travels to Italy, Both, Berghem, Pynacker, Karl Dujardin, embracing the schools of that country within the circle of their studies, did nothing on their return but intermingle southern souvenirs with the realities in the midst of which they were born. This sort of general rule is yet more impressive among those Dutch painters who did not seek models and inspiration outside their own country;—he who traverses Holland at different hours and seasons will find manifold proofs of it.

Should you encounter on a dull day a mournful landscape where northern nature displays its rugged and gloomy aspects, a ravine, a cascade, a dismantled tree, no flocks, no shepherds; in the distance, scarcely visible, some wretched, lonely, solitary cabin, where you would feel life to be a burden, you would exclaim, "Ah, here behold the melancholy Jacques Ruysdaël!" Perhaps you find yourself toward morning on the banks of a canal or river, gazing on a gliding white sail: beyond arise the houses and the church of a small town; on this side, fat, lazy cows lie ruminating amidst the luxuriant field-grass, whilst through fragments of ragged clouds the rays of a splendid morning sun bathe every object in fiery glow. "Behold," you say to yourself, the "creator of light, Albert Cuyp!" A little later, at the quiet mid-day hour, you notice a verdant and peaceful orchard, where every tree casts its shadow on the greensward, and where, in each shade, reposes either a cow, a horse, an ass, a goat, or a sheep, in their simplest and most natural attitudes, and you exclaim at this sight, "Behold, La Fontaine a painter. Here is the inimitable portrayer of animals, Paul Potter!" Still later, at evening, you approach a smiling expanse, where comfortable cattle graze at will, while their attendant guardians blow upon pipes *sub tegmine fagi*, appearing to sigh forth the charms of some rustic Amaryllis; at length you have beneath your eyes an idyl such as a Netherlands Virgil or Theocritus would compose, and you say at once, "Here is the painter of nature in its serene and amiable aspects, Adrien Van de Velde!" And yet later, as the moon ascends upon a throne of clouds, reflecting its silvery disc upon the motionless surface of a winding inlet, with cottages half-concealed in the shadows of poplars and alders, and you say, "Behold the poet and painter of night, Arendt Van der Neer!" A shore from whence the eye ranges over a